

In recognition of the one year anniversary of the attacks on our nation last month, BMS launched a capital fund drive, named for Ian Gray, to raise money for the health care needs of Baltimore's residents.

Ian Gray's dream of improving health care is something we all share. His work was noble and improved the lives of countless Marylanders. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my best wishes to Ian's wife, Ana, and their children and family members. Ian's commitment to the health care of Marylanders lives on through the dedication of a fund to assist Baltimore Medical System to help those in need.

Over one year after the tragic attacks on our nation, we remember and celebrate the life of Ian Gray and continue his important work.

TRIBUTE TO MR. RICHARD CLARK

HON. JOHN E. SWEENEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 17, 2002

Mr. SWEENEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to honor a constituent of the 22nd District of New York—a man who epitomizes the spirit of this great Nation, Mr. Richard Clark of Ticonderoga, New York. In March of 1952, Mr. Clark joined the Ticonderoga Fire Department by enrolling in the Defiance Hook and Ladder Co. #1. He has served his community continually since then, and throughout his half century of service, Mr. Clark has served the Fire Department as a Trustee, Caretaker, Warden, Assistant Foreman, Vice-President and Assistant Chief.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Clark's selfless dedication to Ticonderoga and neighboring communities embodies the true spirit of an American hero. As the result of the September 11th attacks, firefighters have finally received the attention and admiration they have so long deserved. Firefighters put their lives in harm's way with every call, everyday. Some do this because it is their chosen profession as a paid firefighter, others do it as volunteers to assist those in their communities. Risking one's life for the sake of helping others is extremely admirable—to do so without compensation or reward for over 50 years is truly amazing.

Mr. Clark is a true volunteer. He is always willing to assist in training new members, conduct the Fire Company Fund Raisers and assist in the day-to-day operations of the Fire Company. His ability to safely operate the fire apparatus is unparalleled and he is often called on to assist the new driver trainees.

Mr. Speaker, the actions of Firefighter Richard Clark deserve to be recognized. I truly believe that the amount of service one dedicates to his community is a true measurement of one's character. Fifty years of continuous service to the community of Ticonderoga surely speaks volumes about the character of Mr. Richard Clark. I ask my colleagues, along with the 22nd District of New York, to join me as I thank Mr. Clark and for his continued service and contribution to the community.

BEN MCKIBBENS

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 17, 2002

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to an old friend and a pillar in the South Texas community, Ben McKibbens, the President and CEO of Valley Baptist Health System in Harlingen. Ben is a unique patriot and a consummate businessman, and the hospital system in our community will honor him upon his retirement on November 16, 2002.

The health care system in our nation has faced—and continues to face—enormous and mounting problems in the administration of medical services and health care in our communities.

It is people like Ben McKibbens who work hard to make hospitals function in an atmosphere of cost cutting. He is true leader both in our community and in the national healthcare network.

Born in Kentucky and raised in Mississippi, this son of the South won honors as an alumni from Mississippi State College. He completed his Masters program at the University of Alabama in Birmingham. After residency in Hospital Administration at Mobile Infirmary Medical Center in Mobile, Alabama, he moved up the ladder of administration.

An exemplary citizen with a caring heart, Ben has been the President and CEO of Valley Baptist Medical Center and Valley Baptist Medical Development Corporation since early 1977. In 1999, he became President and CEO of Valley Baptist Health system and affiliated corporations, which employs about 2,300 people.

He has a large breadth of experience. He is a fellow in the American College of Healthcare Executives and is a Preceptor to graduate programs in Hospital Administration at the University of Alabama, and Trinity University in San Antonio.

He is widely recognized for his efforts to improve regional health care needs for the South Texas/U.S. Mexico border region, a difficult geographical place to manage health care. In 2002 alone, he was honored with an award from the pharmacists of Texas, the Harlingen Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and the American Heart Association.

He has always been enormously helpful when my office has asked for wisdom on issues related to healthcare. He has worked well together with the South Texas and state entities.

This true Southern gentleman is now Chairman of the Texas Hospital Association (2001-2002) and serves on the Voluntary Hospitals of America Board. He is also past Chairman of the Baptist Hospital Association and Past President of the Texas Baptist Hospital Association.

Ben has been supported throughout his career by his lovely wife Loren, and their children: Ben Jr., Mitchell, Merridy, and Woods. I ask my colleagues to join me today in wishing Ben the best in his retirement.

CHILDREN IN PERIL

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 17, 2002

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, the story below, from Sunday's Pittsburgh Post Gazette, offers yet another example of a child welfare system's failure to provide children and their families with necessary services and safeguards—even in one of the nation's best child welfare systems.

The story below discusses several examples of bad casework that are frightening, and some examples of good casework that are inspiring. But most frightening is the fact that these stories come from one of the best child welfare systems in the country. In most other jurisdictions, the child welfare system is worse.

While this story describes caseworkers that failed to use resources available to them, in most communities, resources and supportive services are not available at all. In other jurisdictions, not only have child welfare workers been found derelict in their duties, but children have died under agency supervision. We cannot continue to spend billions of federal dollars on a system that does not provide what children need to thrive, or in some cases, even to survive. The government must require greater accountability to ensure the health and safety of every child in its custody.

The article follows:

[From the Pittsburgh Post Gazette, Oct. 13, 2002]

Dana Perkins wasn't looking for any help, though she'd admit getting by as a single mother of three was a relentless struggle. Sometimes, too tired to argue, she let her children skip school. Sometimes, too tired to face reality, she numbed herself with cocaine. Then, about 18 months ago, a judge informed her that she'd accept help whether she wanted it or not.

Common Pleas Judge Cheryl Allen decided the combination of truancy and drug abuse endangered the Perkins children. That meant the judge could place them in foster care. But she didn't.

She said Perkins could keep her children as long as she cooperated with Allegheny County's Office of Children, Youth and Families. Allen directed CYF to help Perkins get off drugs and get her kids to school.

Perkins' first caseworker reached into the treasure chest of tools and services available to Allegheny County caseworkers with one hand and grasped Perkins with the other, in a focused attempt to pull her and her family up to the solid ground of sobriety and school success. Perkins' second caseworker, however, seemed to have no reach at all.

The quality of a caseworker can make or break a family. It can be the difference between reunification and termination of parents and children. Some caseworkers are renowned in juvenile court for their ability to solve problems and bring together strengthened families. Others are notorious for the opposite.

Frustrated juvenile court judges have tried to crack down on such workers. Last month, Common Pleas Judge Kathleen R. Mulligan directed CYF to pay a \$150 penalty because a caseworker had failed for 30 days to formally explain why she'd placed children in foster care and neglected to call witnesses for a hearing to determine whether the removal was justified.

Lawyers who practice in juvenile court say casework has improved over the past five